

This is KPTZ 91.9 FM in Port Townsend, Washington. I'm Charlie Bermant, with local news and commentary for Tuesday, January 19, 2021.

The Jefferson County Department of Health has not posted any additional cases of COVID-19 since Friday, the site now lists 269 reported cases and just seven people awaiting test results. There are 20 active cases now in isolation. These numbers will change, especially after Jefferson County Health Officer Dr. Tom Locke makes his weekly presentation to the county commissioners this morning. For the latest data, visit the Jefferson County Department of Health website (<https://jeffersoncountypublichealth.org/1466/Case-Information>) or the county's official Facebook page.

Vaccinations are said to be becoming more available in Washington State, but there is some confusion about the process. On Monday, the State Department of Health announced the expansion of vaccine access to thousands more people per week. As of January 16, it had distributed more than 294,000 doses of vaccine, or 42% of those delivered. Last week, there was an average of 14,300 vaccines per day, with the hope to increase that to 45,000 a day once the state receives enough doses to do so.

In a press release, the Health Department announced the lowering of age restrictions to 65 and older, and a path to expand vaccinations beyond the healthcare sector to other Washingtonians. Locally, Jefferson Healthcare is only accommodating members of the general public who are 80 and older, according to a press release issued yesterday. Like the COVID-19 numbers, this could change quickly, with the latest information available at the hospital's website, <https://jeffersonhealthcare.org/covid-19-vaccine/>.

People seeking vaccinations can try their luck with findyourphasewa.org. I went through the process this morning identifying myself correctly as a 66 year old nonessential worker, and was told that I qualified to receive the vaccine. It pushed me into a scheduling link at the Port Townsend Safeway, but no appointments available for the next two years. So, obviously, the process is still under construction.

You can try this at home, but one recommended course of action is to just watch healthcare websites for the latest vaccine news. Jefferson Healthcare has asked people to be patient and not contact the hospital or the provider with questions. Often times, they won't know any more than you.

The "Taming Bigfoot" community carbon footprint reduction competition that last occurred in 2016 is returning this year, attempting to make this action fun, rewarding and educational, according to the organization's web site. The idea is to have a diverse mix of individuals work together as a team to collectively reduce their team's carbon footprint, competing with other teams to see who can show the most improvement. The event is sponsored by Jefferson County's Local 20/20 group (<https://12020.org/>).

During the competition there will be periodic updates on team standings interspersed with short informational presentations related to climate change in Jefferson County. These gatherings will take place online, keeping our miles driven down while practicing social distancing. Results will be announced in early May, with prizes (donated by local businesses and organizations) awarded to the teams achieving the greatest emissions reductions. Teams are forming now, and applications are due by January 22.

Joe Biden will be inaugurated as our 46th president at noon Eastern time tomorrow – which is 9am here in Port Townsend – but locals are planning a local commemoration at noon local time in the Pope Marine Plaza across from City Hall. According to the *Peninsula Daily News*, attendance expectations at the the socially distanced event are up for grabs, but a couple of hundred people showed up at a rally celebrating Biden’s election in November. As for the possibility of counter-demonstrators, organizers said the focus of the rally is on the right of peaceful free expression. Just in case, the Port Townsend Police Department will have extra officers on site, according to the article.

KPTZ 91.9 FM brings you local news at noon Monday through Saturday and at 5pm Monday through Thursday. You can contact us through news@kptz.org.

This is Charlie Bermant. Thank you for listening.